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Whitehead's Concept of God as Compared with St. Thomas's Concept

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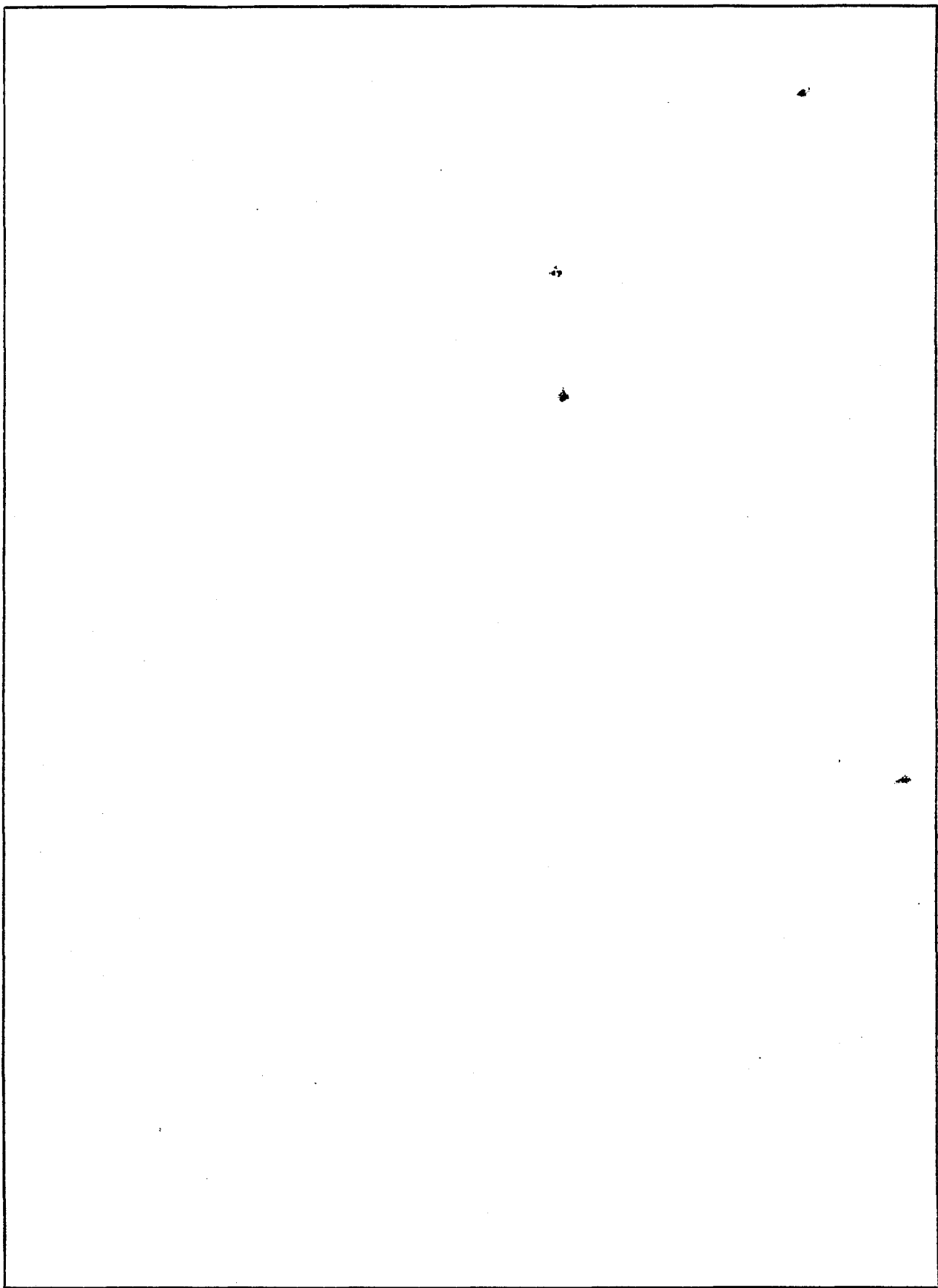
WHITEHEAD'S CONCEPT OF GOD AS COMPARED
WITH ST. THOMAS'S CONCEPT

BY

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VITA

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INTRODUCTION

It is rather interesting to examine what a modern philosopher says about God who has explicitly rejected St. Thomas's God and has put forth a substitute which according to one critic is more Godlike than that of St. Thomas.¹ In examining St. Thomas's explanation of God it is interesting to notice that he explains his position in such a way as to meet the objections brought out by Whitehead against his own view and gives very definite reasons for excluding those concepts which Whitehead wishes to use as descriptive of his own God.

The starting point of this thesis was a statement made by Hartshorne. In order to understand why he made it, it was necessary to examine his analysis of St. Thomas's God, and next his analysis of Whitehead's God in order to see why he preferred the God of Whitehead to the God of St. Thomas.

Hartshorne's account of Whitehead's God is adequate for the most part, and therefore instead of describing Whitehead's God by direct quotations from Whitehead himself I have quoted Hartshorne's summary of Whitehead's descriptions with references to the relevant passages in Whitehead. However, at times I brought in direct quotations from Whitehead where they seemed important, and in particular I quoted Whitehead directly

¹ Charles Hartshorne, "Whitehead's Idea of God," The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, p. 523.

in a few points which Hartshorne did not sufficiently emphasize. The same applies to the account which Hartshorne gives of St. Thomas's God. This is simply a restatement of Whitehead's own position on that point and therefore any direct quotations from Whitehead as regards the God of St. Thomas are merely for the sake of emphasis.

On examining St. Thomas's own concept of God in the light of Hartshorne's difficulties and in contrast with the substitute account of God which Whitehead proposes, I was very much interested to observe that in St. Thomas himself one could find: (a) a discussion of the very difficulties which Whitehead raises against St. Thomas's God and (b) explicit reasons for rejecting the component elements of the substitute concept which Whitehead offers.

Although I have reason to believe that this thesis is acceptable in its present form, if time permitted I should prefer for the purpose of publication to recast it along the following lines: first, to present point by point Whitehead's comments on St. Thomas's God together with St. Thomas's anticipations of those comments; and second, to present in turn the various elements of Whitehead's concept of God in contrast to the reasons which St. Thomas puts forward for rejecting those same elements.

It is very difficult to give an analysis of Whitehead's positive doctrines because of his esoteric terminology. He

has created an entirely new philosophic vocabulary and has the habit of using familiar words in novel senses. To ferret out the meaning he attaches to words is a study in itself.

PART I

CHAPTER I

HARTSHORNE'S ANALYSIS OF ST. THOMAS'S CONCEPT

In the first part of this chapter Professor Hartshorne's statement of Whitehead's views on St. Thomas are presented. A few points omitted by Hartshorne but relevant to our problem are added towards the close of the chapter by the writer.

St. Thomas's God, as Whitehead conceives Him, is "sheer absolute perfection."¹ He is defined as completeness or maximality of value, such that nothing conceivably could be added to it."² He is the "pure actuality," which contains no potency whatsoever. He is the "cause of all," "which is in no aspect of its being the effect of any."³ He is the "changeless," which is in no aspect changing;⁴ the "static," which is in no aspect dynamic;⁵ the independent, which is in no aspect dependent,⁶ the one which is in no aspect many. In brief, He is the all-perfect, infinite, immutable, transcendent, self-subsistent, "static Absolute."

As we shall see when examining St. Thomas's God, this description is correct except in one point. ⁷ We must now

¹ Charles Hartshorne, "Whitehead's Idea of God," in The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, p. 518. See also A. N. Whitehead, Modes of Thought, pp. 92-95.

² Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 516.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Whitehead, Modes of Thought, p. 112

⁵ Ibid., p. 111.

⁶ A. N. Whitehead, Religion in the Making, p.107.

⁷ See below, pp. 17-18.

examine the analysis Professor Whitehead makes of each of these attributes and his reasons for rejecting them.

All of the attributes of the traditional God, it is Whitehead's conviction, are arrived at by abstraction, a process which is "nothing else than the omission of part of the truth."⁸ The notion of complete or maximum perfection, for example, cannot be conceived except by abstracting from, or omitting from consideration "all mutual exclusiveness among values," and also "every aspect of process."⁹ For it is evident that perfections of diverse types are discordant. The perfection of a Gothic Cathedral, for example, is not the perfection of a nightingale. Since, then, "there are possibilities of harmony which produce evil in joint realization, or are incapable of such conjunction,"¹⁰ there can be no "totality which is the harmony of all perfections."¹¹ It is also evident that God and the whole are constantly evolving, and perfections which are incompatible in one set of circumstances may occur together in a later stage of process.¹² Hence at no epoch in the creative advance may God be "absolute perfection." Another reason advanced by Whitehead for rejecting the attributes of infinite perfection in God is that finite good could not exist if there were any being which is the "infinite of

⁸ Modes of Thought, p. 189.

⁹ Hartshorne, op. cit. p. 516.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 520.

¹¹ A. N. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, p. 330. For a critical analysis of this objection see below pp. 14-16.

¹² Whitehead, Modes of Thought, p. 75. For a critical analysis of this objection, see below pp. 34-39.

all perfection." For to affirm the existence of an infinite good external to and distinct from the world, and at the same time, to affirm the existence of finite good, appears to him to be a patent contradiction.¹³ It is conceived by abstracting from consideration the interrelatedness of all things, including God.

A similar abstractedness, or one-sidedness of view, is involved in the Thomistic concept of God as the "immutable" being and as "pure actuality." Immutability omits activity. It is the extreme notion of being as static in opposition to being as dynamic. Dynamic is the qualification " which has been most sadly lacking in the tradition." ¹⁴ "Pure actuality" is one-sided for it omits potentiality. That it cannot be ascribed to God is clear from the consideration that potentiality could not exist if there were any being who was "pure actuality." ¹⁵ Also, since God has not produced all the effects He could produce, He contains potentiality. ¹⁶

The concept of God as wholly independent of the world, as a "cause of all," "which is in no aspect of its being the effect of any," is another idea arrived at by abstraction, or

13 Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 534. St. Thomas's anticipation of this objection is quoted below p.16. His reply is given below p.17.

14 Ibid., St. Thomas's anticipation of this objection is quoted below pp. 17-18.

15 Ibid. p. 526. See Below p. 18 for our answer to this objection.

16 Ibid., p. 517. For a critical analysis of this objection see below pp. 18-19.

omitting part of the truth.¹⁷ Every actual entity is both cause and effect. Further, there can be no cause without an effect. Again, "no God is conceivable who would not depend for part of his value on the actions of creatures." Also, "the doctrine of radical and complete independence of God from the world represents an extreme position," the opposite of which is the doctrine of "his complete identity with it."¹⁸ But extreme positions never represent the truth. "There is no entity, not even God's, which requires nothing but itself in order to exist."¹⁹

Such are Whitehead's reasons for rejecting the Thomistic conception of God, as correctly restated by Hartshorne; and such, apparently, are Hartshorne's own reasons for rejecting it. A few additional objections which further elucidate Whitehead's position, but which are not explicitly mentioned by Hartshorne follow.

Whitehead asserts that all of the attributes of the Thomistic God represent mere abstractions, similar to the ideas in Plato's realm of forms. Thus Whitehead affirms:

The most simple doctrine about types of being is that some extreme type exists independently of the rest of things. For example, Greek philosophers, and in particular, Plato, seem to have held this doctrine

17 Ibid., p. 517. See below pp.19-21 for St. Thomas's anticipation of this objection.

18 Ibid., p. 524.

19 Whitehead, Religion in the Making, p. 107. For a critical analysis of this objection see below pp.21-27.

in respect of qualitative abstractions, such as number, geometrical relations, moral characteristics, and the qualitative disclosures of the higher sense perceptions. . . . Later, it transformed the Hebraic elements in Christian theology. . . . This notion of the value of timeless forms leads to rhetorical question-begging phrases, such as 'self-sustaining,' 'completely real,' 'perfection.'

20

The notions of immutability and self-subsistence, in Whitehead's view, were derived from the Greek notion of mathematical forms. "Each number, each ratio, each geometric form exhibited a static attainment.... These ideal forms are motionless.... and self-sufficient." Accordingly, ultimate reality was conceived in the guise of a "static Absolute." And "the static Absolute has been passed over to philosophic theology, as a primary presupposition." ²¹ Thomists, then, influenced by the Greeks, have set up in the place of the concrete God, a false abstraction. In Whitehead's words, they have fallen into the "Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness" - "the error of mistaking the abstract for the concrete." ²²

Another reason given by Whitehead for rejecting the traditional notion of God is that, in his view, it is based on an erroneous science and an erroneous cosmology. He asserts:

The phrase, "Prime Mover", warns us that Aristotle's thought was enmeshed in the

20 Modes of Thought, pp. 92-94.

21 Ibid., p. 111.

22 A. N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, pp. 74-75. For a critical analysis of this objection see below pp. 27-29.

details of an erroneous physics and an erroneous cosmology Today we repudiate the Aristotelian physics and the Aristotelian cosmology In the place of Aristotle's God as Prime Mover, we require God as the Principle of Concretion. ²³

The (in Whitehead's view) erroneous theory of cosmology which regards the laws of nature as imposed, is, according to him, the basis of the traditional concept of God as First Cause.

[The theory which conceives the laws directing the universe as imposed] requires a transcendent God as imposer God made his appearance in religion under the frigid title of First Cause, and was appropriately worshipped in white-washed churches. ²⁴

An erroneous theory of science, combined with Christian theology, combined with ancient despotism, produced the classical concept of God, according to Whitehead.

The notion of God as 'unmoved mover' is derived from Aristotle The notion of God as 'eminently real' is a favorite doctrine of Christian theology. The combination of the two into the doctrine of an aboriginal, eminently real, transcendent creator, at whose fiat the world came into being, and whose imposed will it obeys, is the fallacy which has infused tragedy into the histories of Christianity and of Mohametanism The Church gave unto God the attributes which belonged exclusively to Caesar. ²⁵

It is Whitehead's opinion that one must change his notion of God with every important new scientific advance and every

²³ Ibid., p. 250.

²⁴ Adventures of Ideas, p. 154.

²⁵ Ibid.

notably new form of government. "Science suggests a cosmology; and whatever suggests a cosmology suggests a religion." ²⁶

"The great point to be kept in mind is that normally an advance in science will show that statements of various religious beliefs require some sort of modification." ²⁷ And religion should learn to "change face in the same spirit as does

science." ²⁸ "In the origin of civilized religion, Gods are like Dictators," we are told. "When the religious thought of the ancient world from Mesopotamia to Palestine and from Palestine to Egypt, required terms to express that ultimate unity of direction in the universe. . . . they could find no better way to express themselves than by borrowing the characteristics of the touchy, vain, imperious tyrants who ruled the empires of the world." ²⁹ But "the old phraseology is at variance with the psychology of modern civilizations." ³⁰

Accordingly, it is Whitehead's belief, that a new idea of God founded upon the new physics and upon the new democracies must be given to twentieth-century mankind. His substitute for the Thomistic God will now be considered.

26 Religion in the Making, p. 141.

27 Science and the Modern World, p. 257.

28 Ibid., p. 270.

29 Modes of Thought, p. 68.

30 Science and the Modern World, p. 274.

CHAPTER II

HARTSHORNE'S ANALYSIS OF WHITEHEAD'S CONCEPT

Whitehead's God, as Professor Hartshorne very adequately represents him, is the supreme exemplification of "ultimate contraries."¹ He is both the permanent and the flux, the temporal and the eternal, the "supreme cause" and the "supreme totality of effects," the unity and the complexity, the activity and the passivity, the being and the becoming, yes he is even the joy and the suffering, the good and the evil, and the creator and the creature, though not in the same aspects of his being.²

There are two natures in Whitehead's God, — the Primordial and the Consequent. In his Primordial Nature, God is "static," "eternal," "complete, perfect, infinite," yet he is "unconscious," and "deficient in actuality."³ The apparent inconsistency of this assertion is, as Dr. Hartshorne assures us, only apparent, for the completeness, perfection, and infinity ascribed to God belong only to "the dimension of 'mentality', or abstract realization of value." "The unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality, as such realization of the potential, is superior to any conceivable conceptual realization or awareness of potency which could be distinguished from God's." In the "concrete dimension of value" God even in his Primordial

¹ Op. cit., p. 523.

² Ibid.

³ A. N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, pp. 521, 523 ff.
See also Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 525.

Nature, must not be understood to be infinite and perfect.⁴ God in his Consequent Nature, or concrete being, is conscious and finite. It is in this aspect that He is also "fluent," temporal, passive, and dependent upon creatures.⁵

God and the world are not separated, for God is the "all inclusive actual entity." His being and the being of creatures are so fused that any creature "if and when it exists, must be fully contained in God, so that the two could not be distinguished except as the other failed to contain some value that was contained in God."⁶ The only difference, then, which separates God from creatures is one of value. There is no ontological separateness of one from the other.⁷

This notion of God's relation to the world, according to Professor Whitehead avoids two extremes: first, the extreme doctrine of "radical and complete independence of God from the world," which is the position of traditional theism, and which according to Whitehead is best exemplified in the rigid monotheism of the old Testament;⁸ and secondly, the opposite extreme of God's complete identity with the world, as equivalent to Pantheism.

God, therefore, is not purely transcendent, nor is He purely immanent. He is neither "mere creator," nor "mere total of creatures." The phrase which properly expresses what He is, is:

4 Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 526 (Italics not in the original).

5 For a critical analysis of this position see below pp.31-32.

6 Ibid., p. 525.

7 For a critical analysis of this position see below pp.32-34.

8 Religion in the Making, p. 68.

the creator-with-the-creatures." ⁹ Or, since reality, according to Professor Whitehead is to be viewed as an organic unity, like a person, we may conceive God as "the personality of the cosmic body," ¹⁰ "the harmony of epochal occasions," or organic with the universe.¹¹ God becomes an abstraction if separated from the Universe, just as the cells or molecules of a body have no independent subsistence outside of the body.

God in one aspect of His being is evolving with the progressing world. He is "enriched by the world," ¹² and He "passes back to the world to share this enhancement."¹³ As Whitehead asserts:

The notion of a supreme being must apply to an actuality in process of composition, an actuality not confined to the data of any special epoch in the historic field. Its actuality is founded on the infinitude of its conceptual appetition, and its form of process is derived from the fusion of this appetition with the data received from the world-process. 14

And elsewhere:

It is as true to say that God creates the World, as that the World creates God. 15

Admittedly, "the cause is never 'equal to the effect,' the latter always being the richer; the former, seen retrospectively

⁹ Ibid., p. 517. See also Adventures of Ideas, pp. 154-166.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 550

¹¹ Adventures of Ideas, p. 264. For St. Thomas's reasons for rejecting such a position, see below p. 34.

¹² Charles Hartshorne, "Is Whitehead's God the God of Religion," in Ethics, Vol. LIII, No. 3 (April 1943) p. 226.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Modes of Thought, p. 128.

¹⁵ Process and Reality, p. p. 528. For St. Thomas's reasons for rejecting such a position, see below pp. 34-37.

being a reduction of the latter to an abstract or incomplete version of itself."¹⁶ Moreover, "Neither God nor the World reaches static completion. Both are in the grip of... the creative advance into novelty. Either of them, God and the World, is the instrument of novelty for the other." ¹⁷

Such are the more important aspects of Whitehead's God, as Professor Hartshorne describes them, and as an examination of the relevant passages in Whitehead's works referred to by Hartshorne prove them to be. We now pass to Hartshorne's defense of these attributes as more properly descriptive of the supreme being than those ascribed to God by St. Thomas.

¹⁶ Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 544.

¹⁷ Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 529.

CHAPTER III

HARTSHORNE'S COMPARISON OF THE TWO CONCEPTS AND HIS REASONS FOR HIS CONCLUSION

We have seen why Professor Hartshorne rejects the Thomistic conception of God and what he accepts as a substitute for it. It now remains to be seen why he thinks this new notion is better.

Whitehead's concept, it is Hartshorne's conviction, represents a real, actually existing entity, whereas the idea of God given us by St. Thomas is an "abstract extreme.... involving the fallacy of misplaced concreteness." ¹ For:

Nothing concrete or actual is merely one or merely many, or a mere cause which is in no way incomplete or subject to addition, or an activity which is in no way passive. ²

Also, Whitehead's notion of God as "literally immanent" in creatures, who "appropriates other individualities into himself," and who "requires his union with the world," ³ is better than the Thomistic notion of God as transcendent, which denies the social nature of God and absolutely denies that God is love. ⁴

The idea of a God who is, in some aspect of his being, "in process" and who is capable of "self enrichment" is more rational than the conception of an all-perfect God who is changeless. For

1 Op. Cit., p. 521.

2 Ibid., p. 522.

3 Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, p. 215.

4 Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 528.

to conceive the absolutely perfect it is necessary to abstract from, or omit from consideration, aspects essential to any concrete entity, the temporal character of value, . . . as well as all mutual exclusiveness among values, . . . and all relationship to beings whose value is not perfect." ⁵ The content of the concept of perfection, then, varies with the cosmic advance, and its concrete realization is limited by the setting provided by its cosmic epoch.

5. Ibid., p. 516.

PART II

CHAPTER I

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF HARTSHORNE'S ANALYSIS OF ST. THOMAS'S CONCEPT

In Hartshorne's criticism of traditional theism all of the attributes ascribed to God by St. Thomas are made to appear as "abstract or one-sided" ideas,¹ conceived by omitting from consideration "one pole of a categorical contrast,"² and representative, consequently, of only part-truths. The two attributes of "sheer absolute perfection and sheer causality or actuality" are singled out as especially exemplificative of this error.³

The notion of infinite perfection is held to be incapable of concrete realization on the ground that perfections are diverse and obviously mutually repugnant. "Possibilities are in part mutually incompatible, they are not always compossible, and, as Whitehead says, theologians have been strangely reluctant to face the implications of this truth."⁴

But is St. Thomas committed to the view that God is "the infinitude of all perfections," in the sense that in Him opposite perfections coexist? On the contrary, he is careful to make clear that he does not teach any such absurdity. He himself proposes this very objection before proceeding to show in what way

1 Op. cit. p. 517.

2 Ibid. p. 516.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., p. 526.

all the perfections of creatures are contained in God. Thus, he asserts:

Opposites cannot coexist. Now perfections of things are opposed to each other, for each thing is perfected by its specific difference. But the differences by which genera are divided, and species constituted, are opposed to each other. Therefore, because opposites cannot coexist in the same subject, it seems that the perfections of all things are not in God. 5

However, God is spoken of as universally perfect, St. Thomas explains, "because

He lacks not . . . any excellence that may be found in any genus. This may be seen from two considerations. First, because whatever perfection exists in an effect must be found in the effective cause; either in the same formality, if it is an univocal agent, as when man produces man; or in a more eminent degree, if it is an equivocal agent. . . . Now, it is plain that the effect pre-exists virtually in the efficient cause; and though to exist in the potentiality of a material cause is to exist in a more imperfect way, since matter as such is imperfect, and an agent as such is perfect, still to pre-exist virtually in the efficient cause is to pre-exist, not in a more imperfect, but in a more perfect, way. Since, therefore, God is the first effective cause of things, the perfections of all things must pre-exist in God in a more eminent way. 6

St. Thomas, then, in affirming that all the perfections of creatures are contained in God does not thereby assert that opposites coexist in the same subject, — this could not be done without palpable contradiction, — but that God, as cause, possesses at least equivalently all the perfections of His effects.

5 St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica I q.4 a.2. obj.2.

6 Ibid., Resp.

Certain rules of predication are given us by the Angelic Doctor which assist us in understanding how the various perfections of created things are to be ascribed to God. Thus, he observes, some perfections of their very nature imply imperfection. Among these are all perfections which imply corporeal conditions, such as physical beauty, sight, hearing, and extension. St. Thomas asserts that these are to be predicated of God only metaphorically. Other perfections, such as goodness, life, intelligence and the like, on the contrary, do not of themselves involve imperfection, and so are predicated of God literally. However, since these latter perfections are found in creatures only in a limited and finite manner, they are not attributed to God according to the mode in which the creatures possess them, but in a supereminent way.⁷ By observing St. Thomas's rules of predication, then, it is possible to attribute to God infinite perfection without contradiction.

We have now to examine the objection that finite perfection could not exist if there were any being which was infinite perfection. This objection, like the preceding, must not be supposed to be new. St. Thomas was fully aware of it. His statement of it runs:

. . . that which is a thing in such a way as not to be another thing, is finite according to substance. But God is this and not another; for He is not a stone or wood. Therefore, God is not infinite in substance. 8

This difficulty is based on the fallacy of regarding the

7 Ibid. I q. 13 a 3 ad 1; I q. 13 a 6.

8 Ibid. I q. 7 a 1 obj. 3.

term 'being' as univocal. Professor Hartshorne assumes that God and man are beings in the same sense. Yet the word 'being' is analogous even in its reference to created things. Thus its meaning is not identical when it is applied to substance and to accident, or to a thinker and his thought. Consequently, the existence of an infinite Being who is the fullness of all reality, in no way precludes the existence of finite beings. In other words, God plus creatures does not constitute more being; they simply cannot be added, for creatures are beings in an inferior order. After creation, there are more beings, but there is no more being in the world. A feeble comparison may be made regarding knowledge which is first possessed only by a teacher and later by all his pupils. After the instruction there would be more people who would know, but there would be no more knowledge. Or to use St. Thomas's comparison:

The created good is related to the uncreated good as a point to a line, since there is no proportion between one and the other; whence as a point added to a line does not make it greater, so neither does a created good . . . added to the uncreated good make it greater. 9

This brings us to the objection that an immutable God is "static, inactive, or dead." This is a false equation. St. Thomas never identified an immutable God with a static God. On the contrary, he proves that the immobility to be ascribed to an all-perfect God is not the immutability of inertness or lifelessness, but the immutability of supreme activity. Indeed, anticipating

this very objection he asserts:

It seems that life is not properly attributed to God. For things are said to live inasmuch as they move themselves But movement does not belong to God. Neither, therefore, does life. ⁹

He then points out that activity is not identical with movement or change, but that the more perfect the activity the less is the movement. Thus immanent activity involves less change than transitive activity. Further, the highest kind of immanent activity is intellection, and this operation in God involves no movement. Consequently, God though immutable is supremely active and living.

Professor Hartshorne's difficulties regarding "sheer causality or actuality" must now be examined. His rejection of the conception of God as "pure actuality" on the ground that, "potentiality . . . could be nothing, were there a complete actuality,"¹⁰ is the result of his simple and univocal conception of the notion of being. As we have already shown, this notion is analogous and consequently, the existence of real potentiality in the order of created things does not preclude the existence in a divine mode of a Being, Who is Pure Act.

But, it is urged, potentiality must exist even in the divine mode of being, since God has not produced all of the effects He could produce. St. Thomas offers a full solution of this difficulty in his Contra Gentiles,¹¹ which we venture to restate

⁹ Summa Theologica, I q. 18 a. 3 obj. 1.

¹⁰ Op. Cit., p. 526.

¹¹ Contra Gentiles, II c. XXXIII and XXXV; also de Pot., q. 3 a 17.

briefly. "It is impossible for a new action to be in the agent, unless the latter be in some way moved, at least from inaction to action." But newness of effect does not necessarily prove newness of action, nor consequently change in the agent. For in the case of an agent whose will is absolutely efficacious for producing its effect, the appearance of the latter need not necessarily coincide in time with the act of willing it. But the will can appoint the time as well as other conditions of the thing. Therefore an effect may follow anew from an agent's former will, without any new action on his part. In God, then, there is no transition from potency to act because effects emerge in time. He has willed from all eternity the moment in time at which they should appear.

Let us now pass to the objections directed against the notion of God as transcendent. "An agent which acts, but is not acted upon,"¹² a God who is 'cause of all,' but effect of none, is regarded by Professor Hartshorne as an absurdity. In his metaphysics, creatures "furnish parts of" God.¹³ But as St. Thomas teaches:

. . . God is outside the order of the whole creation, nor does any relation to the creature arise from His nature; for He does not produce the creature by necessity of His nature, but by His intellect and will Therefore there is no real relation in God to the creature, whereas in creatures there is a real relation to God . . . because their very nature entails dependence on God.

14

12 Op. cit., p. 516.

13 Ibid., p. 541.

14 Summa Theologica I q.28 a.1 ad 3.

That the condition of God as Creator does not involve in Him a relation to, and consequently dependence upon the created universe, is shown by St. Thomas¹⁵ from the following considerations. Relations are either real or conceptual in three ways, since every relation has two extremes. They are real in both extremes "when a habitude exists between two things according to some reality which belongs to both," as happens in relations of quantity, such as between double and half, large and small, and the like. They are conceptual in both extremes when the "habitue can only be between things in the apprehension of reason." Thus the relation existing between an idea and a word signifying it, is a conceptual relation, since there is no objective connection between the idea and the word, but only a connection established by the mind.

Finally, a relation may be real in one extreme and conceptual in the other. This happens whenever the two extremes are not of the same order; as objects in nature and concepts representing them belong to the real and the conceptual orders respectively. Between a concept and the object which it represents there is a real relation on the side of the concept, for the latter could not have originated without the former. But the object is in no sense really dependent upon the concept. It is not affected in any way by ideas representing it. (A stone does not grow larger because many think of it.) There is merely a conceptual or mental relation between it and a concept

¹⁵ Ibid., I q. 13 a.7.

representing it. The relation is the same as regards God and the universe. As St. Thomas concludes:

Since therefore God is outside the whole order of creation, and all creatures are ordered to Him, and not conversely, it is manifest that creatures are really related to God Himself; whereas in God there is no real relation to creatures, but a relation only in idea, inasmuch as creatures are referred to Him.

16

God, then, is necessary to the world, but, and here we must disagree with Professor Hartshorne, the world is not necessary to God. The effect cannot exist without its cause, but the converse is not true. As St. Thomas puts it:

If one thing is the cause of another thing, the cause can exist without the thing caused, but not vice versa.

17

We come now to the objection that the Thomistic notion of complete transcendence represents an extreme, the opposite of which is the notion of complete identity between God and the world. We must note, first of all, that the traditional idea of transcendent God is vastly different from Whitehead's notion of it, which Hartshorne apparently adopts. Whitehead equates a transcendent God with a "touchy, vain, imperious tyrant" of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian variety. He is "frigid," unconcerned as to the workings of the world or to the sufferings of man. Moreover, Whitehead informs us:

The concept of him was a sublimation from its barbaric origin. He stood in the same relation to the whole World as early Egyptian or Mesopotamian kings stood to their subject populations.

18

16 Ibid.

17 De Ente et Essentia, c. 4.

18 Adventures of Ideas, p. 216.

Whitehead frequently speaks of the notions of "complete reality," "absolute being," "self-sustaining reality," and the like, as haunting human imagination.²⁰ We do not wonder. For the myth to whom Whitehead ascribes these attributes is but the ghost of the living God. It is the god of the Deists, — whom to most Christians are but Atheists in disguise, — not the Supreme Being of the traditional theists.

The God of Thomistic philosophy, though "above all things by the excellence of His nature," is not on that account distant from and unconcerned about them.²¹ On the contrary, He is very near, for He "is in all things, and innermost," "not, indeed as part of their essence, nor as an accident, but as an agent is present to that upon which it works."²² So intimately is the world related to God that were He to withdraw His sustaining influence from it for one moment, it would relapse into nothingness, just as the light which is caused in the air by the sun disappears at once when the sun ceases to enlighten it.²³

To those who find it difficult to conceive why the world once created could not continue in being without God, just as a house once constructed continues without the builder, St.

Thomas offers the following considerations:

Every agent depends upon its cause, so far as it is its cause. But we must observe that an

20 Cf. Modes of Thought, p. 94.

21 Summa Theologica, I q. 8 a. 1.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., I q. 104, a. 1.

agent may be the cause of the becoming of its effect, but not directly of its being. This may be seen both in artificial and in natural things: for the builder causes the house in its becoming, but he is not the direct cause of its being.

24

The being of the house, St. Thomas explains, depends upon the building materials, - the "cement, stone, and wood," - just as its becoming depends upon the action of the builder. And just as the becoming of an effect ceases upon the cessation of the operation of the agent which is the cause of its becoming; so likewise, the being of a thing also ceases upon the cessation of the action of the agent which is the cause of its being. Consequently, if all of the cosmic influences necessary for the conservation of the house were to withdraw their causality, the structure would at once disappear.

The truth that no being continues in existence without the present actual existence of its cause in being is more evident in the case of animal existence. For it is obvious that the continuance in being of even a gnat depends upon such cosmic influences as solar heat, atmospheric pressure, food, and the like, without which it would at once perish. Though it is less evident at first, it becomes clear upon a little consideration that no created being can continue in existence without the present actual existence of God. Accordingly, St. Thomas concludes, "every creature may be compared to God as the air is to the sun which enlightens it." For as "the air does

not continue to be lit up, even for a moment, when the sun ceases to act upon it," so the creature "would at once cease and all nature would collapse," if the causal power of God were to be withdrawn.²⁵ Since then "God not only gave existence to things when they first began to exist, but also causes existence in them as long as they exist,"²⁶ and, since by His sustaining Power, He conserves them in being at every moment lest they lapse back into the nothingness from which they came, He can scarcely be said to be unconcerned as to the workings of the world.

Is God, however, a "frigid" being, a "tyrant" with whom creation is "an inferior avocation," as Whitehead asserts? A brief consideration of the reason why the world came into being should preserve one from entertaining any such faulty notion. God did not create the universe in order to add to His perfection, or to increase His happiness. He is the fullness of being, of perfection, of happiness. He is in no way greater or happier for having brought the world into existence. God has given being to creatures out of pure benevolence, — that others might share the good which He possesses. Unlike creatures

He does not act on account of His goodness as if He were seeking to acquire goodness which He did not possess; but rather as seeking to communicate what He already possessed. Because God acts, not out of desire of the end, but out of love of it.

27

25 Ibid.

26 Contra Gentiles, III p. 67.

27 De Potentia, q. 3 a. 15 ad 14 um.

Emphasizing the truth that it is not for utility that God has created, St. Thomas also states:

It does not belong to the First Agent . . . to act for the acquisition of some end, He intends only to communicate His perfection, which is His goodness.²⁸ Therefore, He alone is the most perfectly liberal giver, because He does not act for His own profit, but only for His goodness. 29

St. Thomas explains that just as natural things have a natural inclination to diffuse their good among others, — the plant to diffuse itself in a flower, the animal to diffuse itself in its kind, — so, much more does it befit the Divine Goodness from Whom all perfection is derived, to communicate His Good to others. He states:

. . . natural things have a natural inclination not only towards their own proper good, to acquire it if not possessed, and, if possessed, to rest therein; but also to spread abroad their own good amongst others, so far as possible. Hence we see that every agent, insofar as it is perfect and in act, produces its like. It pertains, therefore, to the nature of the will to communicate as far as possible to others the good possessed; and especially does this pertain to the divine will, from which all perfection is derived in some kind of likeness. Hence, if natural things insofar as they are perfect, communicate their good to others, much more does it appertain to the divine will to communicate by likeness its own good to others, as much as is possible. 30

God, then, created beings, not because He had any need of them, nor because He could derive any utility from them, but solely

28 Summa Theologica, I q. 44.a.4.

29 Ibid., I q. 44.a.4. ad 1 un.

30 Ibid., I q. 19.a.2.

to communicate His Goodness.

Such divine altruism is incredible to Professor Hartshorne who is of the opinion that:

Only a mere machine that blindly passed out benefits could conform to the notion of benevolence that had nothing to gain from its service to others? 31

There is another thought which carries with it the refutation of the false notion that a transcendent God "stood in the same relation to the whole World as early Egyptian or Mesopotamian kings stood to their subject populations." It is that God transcendent and perfect loves all creatures with an eternal love. Although creatures have not existed from eternity, except in God, yet because they have been in Him from eternity, God has known them eternally in their proper natures; and for that reason has loved them.³² Moreover, God does not love as we love. We love beings because they are lovable, - their goodness arouses love in us. But God does not love creatures because they are lovable; they are lovable because He loves them.

God loves everything that exists. Yet not as we love. Because since our will is not the cause of the goodness of things, but is moved by it as by its object, our love, whereby we will good to anything, is not the cause of its goodness; but conversely, its goodness, whether real or imaginary, calls forth our love. 33

31 Charles Hartshorne, "Is Whitehead's God the God of Religion," Ethics, Vol. LIII No. 3 (1934) p. 225.

32 St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I q. 20 a.2.

33 Ibid., I q.20 a.2 ad 2.

A complete analysis of all the titles by which the world and God are intimately related in Thomistic philosophy would carry us far beyond the scope of this paper. However, the thoughts we have sketched: that God loved the world from all eternity, that because of His love of it He brought it into being, and that He conserves it in being at every moment lest it fall back into nothingness, — all prove that the God of St. Thomas is not the extreme which lies opposite to the position which regards God as completely identified with the world. On the contrary, it is the virtuous mean which lies between the two extremes of Pantheism and Deism.

So much for Whitehead's objections against the traditional conception of God as restated by Hartshorne. Two further objections raised by Whitehead, but not explicitly mentioned by Hartshorne, must not be considered: first that the attributes of the Christian God represent mere abstractions similar to the abstractions in Plato's realm of forms; and secondly, that they are based upon an erroneous theory of science and consequently must be abandoned.

As regards the first objection, Whitehead, as we have seen, confuses abstraction with omission or absence. He views the notions of self-subsistent being, immutable being, infinite being, transcendent being, and the like, as mere abstractions, because of such pre-suppositions as:

There is no entity, not even God, "which requires nothing but itself in order to exist."

34

No actuality is a static fact . . .
 "existence in any of its forms
 cannot be abstracted from process." 35

All realization is finite. 36

No entity can be considered in
 abstraction from the Universe. 37

But all of these assumptions are erroneous as we shall show
 in the next chapter.

That it is a mistake to attribute to St. Thomas the
 Platonic position is clear from the consideration that Plato's
 "universals," - "Beauty," the "Good," and the like, - are
 essences, they are not existences. Essence, with Plato, is
 higher than existence. But unless there be something whose
 essence is its existence, essence can be understood without
 anything being known of its existence. Hence Plato's Ideas
 of the Good, Beauty, and the One may not exist in the natural
 order. St. Thomas's Good, "Pure Act," however, is an Exis-
 tence, "He is a Pure Act of Existing." 38 That St. Thomas's
 conclusions about God really apply to an actual entity is
 obvious once the value of the idea is properly understood.
 The idea reveals directly reality, and only indirectly the
 mental representation of it. Its purpose is primarily to make
 known the object, and only secondarily to be known itself. It
 is the means by which the intellect knows, and not that which
 it knows. "The stone is that which is understood [i.e. known]

35 Adventures of Ideas, p. 354.

36 Ibid., p. 330.

37 Mathematics and the Good, p. 672

38 E. Gilson, God and Philosophy.

and not the likeness [i.e. the idea] of the stone; except by a reflection of the intellect on itself: otherwise the objects of science [i.e. knowledge] would not be things, but only intelligible species [i.e. ideas] " 39

Ideas, then, have a real value because they make known things. In like manner judgments which are composed of ideas, are judgments of reality. Further, reasoning which is made up of judgments, draws conclusions about reality. When the mathematician reasons about quantity, his conclusions apply to quantity in the real order. When a physicist reasons about motion, his conclusions apply to motion as it is. When a philosopher reasons about God, his conclusions apply to a real Being, and not to a mere subjective idea or abstraction (unless, his judgments are false or his reasoning processes are incorrect).

This brings us to the final objection that the traditional theistic arguments are based upon ancient and medieval science and consequently must be abandoned. Contrary to Whitehead's assumption, Thomistic theodicy is not built upon any system of natural science. Indeed, St. Thomas teaches that it is an error to apply the principles and methods of a lower science to a higher science. "The principles of mathematics," he declares, by way of example, "are applicable to physics, but the converse is not true, for physics depends upon mathematics,

39 St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I q.76 a.2 ad 4.

but not vice versa." 40 Now philosophy, which is the science which studies being, not under any particular aspect, but being as being, is above all other sciences and, therefore, wholly independent of them. Consequently, just as it is ridiculous to suppose that the multiplication table must be altered with each new advance in physics, so it is equally absurd to believe that our concept of God must be recast with every new advance in mathematics, or physics, or biology. On the contrary, it is Whitehead's concept which is admittedly grounded upon the new science that will pass away when the present theories become antiquated.

40 De Trinitate Boetii, q. 5 a. 3 ad 5.

CHAPTER II
CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF HARTSHORNE'S ANALYSIS
OF WHITEHEAD'S CONCEPT

Professor Hartshorne's plain description of Whitehead's God is, as we have seen,¹ substantially correct. The validity of his conclusion that this God is a real God must now be examined.

According to the Chicago professor "the entire complexity of ultimate contraries" ² must be applied to God. Let us consider the most fundamental of these sets of opposites and see if it is reasonable to apply them to the Supreme Being. Thus, let us examine if:

"It is as true to say that God creates the World, as that the World creates God."

And if:

"It is as true to say that God is permanent and the World fluent, as that the World is permanent and God is fluent." ³

As regards the first contention, Dr. Hartshorne, like Whitehead, is convinced that, "No God is conceivable who would not depend for part of his value upon the action of creatures." ⁴ And when we investigate concerning what "part of his value" it is for which a God is thus dependent we find it is a very important part indeed. For it is in his "concrete

¹ See above, Part I, Ch. II.

² Op. cit., p. 523.

³ Ibid., p. 522; also Whitehead, Process and Reality p. 528.

degree," that is, in his real, actual being, that he depends upon them. "All realization is social," we are told, " and in its concrete degree dependent upon other being."⁵ In Dr. Hartshorne's view, God apart from the universe possesses only "conceptual" or "abstract realization of value," as opposed to real or "concrete dimension of value."⁶

But if this is so, then God apart from the universe possesses no real being. For to maintain on this supposition, that God apart from the universe is anything real, it would be necessary to identify the conceptual with the real. But these two orders are totally distinct — one belongs to the order of objective existence, the other to the order of thought. To identify them is to identify the diverse. But if God possesses no real being apart from the universe he is not God but the universe.

However, Dr. Hartshorne protests that the God of Whitehead is not completely identified with the world. He is not the God of Pantheism. Nevertheless, if God is "the synthesis of the total universe," if he is "the all-inclusive actual entity," if creatures "furnish parts of God," if the only difference which separates God and creatures is one of "value," if there is no ontological separateness between the one and the other, then there is no reason for God being distinct from the world.

But to make God and the world ontologically one, is to

⁵ Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, p. 215.

⁶ See above, pp. 8-9.

make the mover identical with the moving thing, under the same formal relation, and to make the simple identical with the composite, the necessary with the contingent, the cause with the effect, in a word, it is to deny the first principles of reason.

St. Thomas's God, in contrast with this, is "outside the order of the whole creation." For He is different in nature from all created things. In creatures essence is always distinct from existence, whereas in God essence and existence are identical. For:

Existence is that which makes every form or nature actual; for goodness or humanity is only spoken of as actual when it is spoken of as existing. It is necessary, therefore, that existence should stand to essence, which is distinct from it, in the same relation as actuality to potentiality. Therefore, since in God there is no potentiality, it follows that in Him essence does not differ from existence. Therefore His essence is His existence.

7

God, then, is His being, His goodness, His perfections, whereas creatures merely have their being, their perfections. God is being itself, creatures are beings merely by participation. Moreover, all the being and goodness which creatures possess they hold from God, Who called them forth from nothingness. Without Him they would have only non-being. Now there can be no identification of the diverse. Since the being of God and the being of creatures belong to wholly different orders,

7 St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I q. 3 a. 4.
quoted in Scholastic Metaphysics II, by J.F.McCormick, p.100.

creatures cannot "furnish parts of God," or fuse with Him or be added to or subtracted from Him. The difficulty of conceiving how creatures can be derived from God without forming part of Him arises from the failure, already mentioned,⁸ to conceive "being" as analogous.

St. Thomas also proves negatively that God is distinct from the world. As if writing for our own times, he asks, "Whether God enters into the composition of other things?" He then proves that it is impossible for God to be united to the universe either as the soul of the world, as the formal principle of things, or as the material principle of things. For God is the first efficient Cause, and the efficient cause cannot be identical either with the form or with the matter of its effect. It "is not identical numerically with the form of the thing caused, but only specifically;" and it is neither numerically nor specifically identical with the matter of the thing caused.⁹ Consequently, just as a statue can never be identical with the sculptor, participated being can never be identical with necessary being. To view God as "the personality of the cosmic body," as the "mind" or soul of the universe, is to conceive God as both maker and made - as the essential part of a compound which He Himself has created, - which is absurd.

This brings us to the second contention: that God is "in process" with the evolving world. "All realization," we are

⁸ See above pp. 16-17.

⁹ Summa Theologica, I q. 3 a. 8.

told, "involves implication in the creative advance." 10

"A process is inherent in God's nature whereby His infinity is acquiring realization." 11 But God cannot be "in process" nor implicated in "the creative advance." For, as St. Thomas proves, "Whatever is in movement is moved by another." Movement or "process" is necessarily a transition from potency to act. (By potency is meant passive capability. It is "the principle through which anything is capable of being moved or acted upon by another." 12 Act is the realization of potency),

But:

Nothing can be moved from potentiality to actuality, except by some being already in a state of actuality. But it is not possible that the same thing should be at once actual and potential in the same respect, but only in different respects. For what is actually hot cannot simultaneously be potentially hot; but it is simultaneously potentially cold. It is therefore impossible that in the same respect and in the same way a thing should be both mover and moved, i.e., that it should move itself. Therefore, whatever is in motion must be put in motion by another. If that by which it is put in motion be itself put in motion, then this also must needs be put in motion by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and, consequently no other mover; seeing that the subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is put in motion by the hand. Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other, and this everyone understands to be God. 13

10 Whitehead, Modes of Thought, p. 200.

11 Ibid., Adventures of Ideas, p. 356.

12 Comm. Met. V., Lect. 14.

13 Summa Theologica, I q. 2 a.3.

If a thing, then, has not a particular form of being, it cannot be the source from which it receives the process by which it attains that new form. "No one can give (either to himself or another) what he does not possess." Now a continuous "process" involves a continuous transition from potency to act, — a continuous production of a new effect. But the sufficient reason of the new effect can only be the continuous operation of an efficient cause. The sufficient reason of "process" can only be a being in act. Otherwise we should have to say that being comes from nothingness, the greater comes from the less, what has not being has being, which is absurd.

We note that this absurdity is not beyond the credulity of contemporary philosophers. Professor Hartshorne clearly asserts, "the cause is never 'equal to the effect,' the latter always being the richer; the former, seen retrospectively, being a reduction to an abstract or incomplete version of itself."

Whitehead's God, then, who is "in process," demands a mover. To say that he derives his added perfections from creatures does not help the situation. For whence do creatures derive them? According to this metaphysics, creatures derive them from God and God derives them from creatures. "Neither God nor the World reaches static completion. Both are in the grip . . . of the creative advance into novelty. Either of them, God and the World, is the instrument of

novelty for the other." ¹⁵ "God is enriched by the world . . . he passes back to the world to share this enhancement." Paupers need be penniless no longer on this reasoning. Let them merely get together and enrich each other.

Professor Whitehead's attempt to evade this difficulty by supposing that God is acted upon, or moved in one aspect, but in a different aspect of his being, he is the agent, is untenable. For there can be no vicious circle in the same order of causality. Otherwise the cause would and would not presuppose its effect. If the light in the air depends upon the transmission of light from the sun, solar light cannot depend upon light in the air. If knowledge in the pupil depends upon the teacher, the pupil is not the efficient cause of this knowledge in the teacher.¹⁶

In contrast with this theory of a "fluent" God, who grows, improves and enriches himself, and who, therefore, necessarily presupposes an actuality superior to himself who actually possesses the improvement and enrichment for which this one is as yet only in potency, is the Thomistic doctrine of an unchangeable, infinitely perfect actuality, "Pure Act," "He Who Is," "Subsistent Being," "the plenitude of all perfection of all being," and the adequate source of all becoming or "process" in the universe.

We have already seen that the world requires a prime mover (pp. 35-36); that the prime mover must be "Pure Act" is clear

15 Process and Reality, p. 529. (Italics not in the original).

16 Contra Gentiles, Bk I C. XIII.

from the consideration that potentiality presupposes actuality. But God is the First Cause. He must therefore be in no way potential. As St. Thomas asserts:

The first being must of necessity be in act, and in no way in potentiality. For although in any single thing that passes from potentiality to actuality, the potentiality is prior in time to the actuality, nevertheless absolutely speaking, actuality is prior to potentiality; for whatever is in potentiality can be reduced into actuality only by some being in actuality. Now it has already been proved that God is the First Being. It is therefore impossible that in God there should be any potentiality. 17

Since God is Pure Act, He must also be most perfect, "for a thing is perfect in proportion to its state of actuality, because we call that perfect which lacks nothing of the mode of its perfection." 18 Pure Act, then, is pure perfection - unlimited or infinite reality. 19

That God is altogether immutable follows from the fact that He is infinitely perfect.

Everything which is moved acquires something by its movement, and attains to what it had not attained previously. But since God is infinite, comprehending in Himself all the plenitude of perfection of all being, He cannot acquire anything new, nor extend Himself to anything whereto He was not extended previously. Hence movement in no way belongs to Him. 20

The real God, then, cannot receive perfection. He has of

17 Summa Theologica, I q. 3 a.1.

18 Ibid., I q. 4 a. 1.

19 Ibid., I q. 7 a. 1.

20 Ibid., I q. 9 a. 1.

Himself, from all eternity, all that He can have. Neither can He be "in process," in the course of which the more perfect is always produced by the less perfect, for such is a patent absurdity. On the contrary, the real God, incomparable perfect, abides eternally unchanged.

CONCLUSION

EXAMINATION OF HARTSHORNE'S COMPARISON AND EVALUATION OF HIS CONCLUSION

We have seen that the attributes of St. Thomas's God are very different from Dr. Hartshorne's notion of them. We have also seen that the substitute attributes postulated by Whitehead cannot be applied to a supreme being. The conclusion that the God of Whitehead is more the supreme being than is the God of St. Thomas, may now be evaluated.

According to Professor Hartshorne:

It is the unrivalled excellence of the activity-and-passivity, the unity-and-complexity, the being-and-becoming, yes the joy-and-suffering, of God which elevates him above all others, actual or conceivable. 1

The perfect God "requires his union with the World." He is "the creator-with-the-creatures." But, as we have already proved,² none of these sets of "contraries" can be applied to God. To sum up briefly: God cannot be both "being-and-becoming," or "activity-and-passivity," for that which is in any aspect "becoming" or passive, demands a cause. "Becoming, receptivity," or "process" necessarily involves the emergence of an additional element, and the ultimate source of this addition must be a higher cause. To affirm the contrary is to assert that being comes from nothing, which is absurd. Since,

1 Op. Cit., p. 523.

2 See Part II, Chapter II.

then, Whitehead's God is "becoming," "fluent," passive or moving, he demands a Prime Mover.

God cannot be both "the unity-and-complexity" (as a human being is an individual whole constituted by many parts) because whatever is composite needs a cause. "Because every composite is posterior to its component parts, and is dependent upon them." ³ Whitehead's composite God, then, presupposes the existence of a Being, Absolutely Simple, who causes his diverse elements to unite.

Finally, God cannot "require his union with the World." Nor can "the relationships of God to the World . . . lie beyond the accidents of his will, and . . . be founded upon the necessities of the nature of God and the nature of the World." ⁴ For a being who exists and acts merely from the necessity of his nature presupposes a Being Who gave him that nature and imposed on him the law according to which he should act.

The God of Process and Reality, then, who depends upon other actualities for his complete realization, who is not in all respects infinite, but who is gradually acquiring realization by "process," is in reality no God at all.

Such a being, even if it were a god, would necessarily be inferior to the God of St. Thomas. For "process" or "becoming" is the state of one who is in potency to a perfection which is not yet possessed. "Everything which moves acquires something

³ St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I q.3 a.7.

⁴ Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, p. 215.

by its movement, and attains to what it had not attained previously." ⁵ But the God of St. Thomas possesses "in Himself all the plenitude of perfection of all being. He cannot acquire anything new." Since, then, activity is more than passivity, and being is more than becoming, and possession is more than acquiring, the God who is Pure Act, Pure Being, who is in full possession of Perfection, is more the supreme being than is the one who is "in process" of attaining it.

5 St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I q. 9 a.1.

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The thesis submitted by Sister Mary Vivian Milnor, S.H.M. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Nov. 19, 1943

Date

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